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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

HOW TO PLAN TRAINING IN THE RESERVE COMPONENTS

STUDY INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION

by

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ABSTRACT

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Reserve Component training is a difficult task because of the geographical dispersion of units, their distance from major training areas, increased difficulty of the training task caused by new technology, and, most importantly, the lack of time. This study provides guidelines to assist Reserve Component trainers in alleviating the problems caused by the lack of time. It shows how to plan more efficiently, starting with a long range plan prepared by TAG/MUSARC and culminating with the preparation of unit training schedules.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will provide Reserve Component (RC) trainers with methods by which they can improve their training management, beginning with a long range plan and culminating with the conduct of training meetings used to prepare for training. The RC actively seeks methods to better utilize its limited training time. One of the ways that this can be done is to improve training management, or, more specifically, planning for training.

RC training management is a difficult task. Time is limited, units are normally widely dispersed geographically, and training areas are usually difficult to access because of their distance from RC units. In addition, the overall training task has been made more complex by the technological improvements of modern weapons systems.¹

RC units have, however, made significant progress in training readiness under The Total Force concept² and are training at a level and intensity which was not considered possible 10 to 15 years ago. The improvement in training readiness is primarily due to the hard work and commitment of RC commanders and staffs at all levels. In addition, the RC has been aided in the improvement of its training readiness by a number of developments and training innovations. Training innovations such as MILES and After Action Reviews (AAR) have had a synergistic influence on training effectiveness. The CAPSTONE program has enhanced war fighting capabilities by aligning during peacetime those units that will fight together

in war.³ The RC has also been assisted by its Active Component (AC) counterparts through the affiliation program. Finally, the 25 series Field Manuals are excellent training publications which provide guidelines on how to plan, conduct, and evaluate training. Many units are, however, overcome by the quantity of information and requirements in the numerous training manuals, regulations, and plans. Effectively managing the abundant requirements and guidance in the limited time available is the focus of this paper.

BACKGROUND

The primary problem facing RC units is the lack of their most critical resource - time. It is crucial that RC trainers maximize training benefits from the limited time available which amounts to only 38 to 39 training days each year. This lack of time precludes the RC from training on all of its wartime tasks during the training year (TY). It also reduces the flexibility of RC units to react to short notice changes. The best method to alleviate this problem is sound, logical, detailed planning that focuses on those tasks that make the greatest immediate contribution to war preparedness.

Planning must be a team effort involving not only the RC unit, but The Adjutant General (TAG) for each state Army National Guard (ARNG), the Major US Army Reserve Command (MUSARC) Commander for the US Army Reserve (USAR), the CAPSTONE

gaining commands, and affiliated AC units. They must assist the RC unit commander in prioritizing his training to focus on those tasks which contribute most to wartime readiness.

RC units have traditionally separated their training between that conducted during weekend drills and that conducted during a two week annual training (AT) period. Weekend drills were normally used for individual training and small unit (squad/platoon) tactical training, while AT was used for unit collective training. However, the RC has recognized the need to devote more time to collective training and has not only been conducting more collective training on weekends, but at a higher level (company/battalion) as well. Whenever possible, units are conducting sufficient collective training during weekend drills prior to AT so that they can conduct a unit field training exercise (FTX) during AT which evaluates their ability to execute all the tasks listed on their Mission Essential Task List (METL).

The RC can improve training management by preparing a long range plan that is also used to prepare a two year plan to program critical training resources. RC commanders must know how to prepare their Mission Essential Task Lists (METLs) as well as how to meld all their requirements into a sound training program. (figure 1) In addition, preparation for training must be conducted in a manner which will contribute to the success of the training.

LONG RANGE PLAN

The first step in the planning process should be a multiple year plan published by the TAG/MUSARC HQ. The plan should cover a five year period starting with the next TY. For example, the plan published in TY 89 would cover TY 90 to TY 94. It will schedule Overseas Deployments for Training (ODT), major exercises, AT sites, and external training evaluations. The five year plan is used to provide feeder data for the FORSCOM five year ODT/Exercise Plan, to identify those exercises which are not included in the FORSCOM five year PLAN, and to provide for the long range scheduling of AT sites. The plan also ensures that triennial external training evaluations are programmed for all units. The five year plan provides the basis for the preparation of the major subordinate commands (MSC) two year plans.

PLAN FOR TRAINING RESOURCES

After the Long Range Plan is developed, the MSCs (DIV/BDE HQ) prepare a two year plan⁴ that will identify firm AT and ODT/exercise dates for the next two years. The plan will also identify critical training resources such as ranges, training areas, airlift, AC support, and Maneuver Area Command (USAR) requirements for the next TY. This plan should not be just another planning calendar but the primary document used to resource training. It is prepared in March or April of the TY

so that funds can be programmed into the budget submission in April or May to support required resources for the next TY.

The plan is also used by units to help them establish ammunition requirements for the next TY.

Giving RC units priority for training areas and ranges on weekends as well as for AT periods is essential. This must be done so that they can have firm dates for all training prior to the start of the training year and can properly program resources. As stated earlier, RC units do not have the flexibility to adjust to short notice changes in their training plans caused by scheduling conflicts. This is due to the limited training time available and the inherent problem with civilian employment schedules.⁵ In addition, RC units cannot afford to lose training opportunities caused by a lack of training resources such as airlift or ammunition which may have been caused by short notice changes. In the RC, training opportunities lost may be lost forever. Most units typically do not have the time to reschedule.

Good planning for training resources produces positive results. For example, Western Command (WESTCOM), the Army Area Headquarters in the Pacific, has given RC units priority for training areas and ranges. During the past two years the Hawaii Army National Guard (HARNG) and IX Corps (USAR) have coordinated their training areas and range requirements to eliminate conflicts. Requirements are submitted to the supporting installation by April or May for lock-in prior to the next TY. This coordination accomplishes three objectives.

First, this allows The Adjutant General of Hawaii and the Commander of IX Corps to program funds, ammunition, and aircraft requirements (some units are on islands with limited training areas) for the next TY. Second, the schedule confirms training areas and ranges so that units can start to prepare their yearly training programs. Finally, the schedule will identify open weekends early enough for the AC counterparts to plan for their utilization. It also identifies major training area requirements for AT so that the AC can plan around the RC schedule or coordinate changes early enough to avoid disruption of training to either the RC or AC.

TRAINING PRIORITY LIST

The next step in the planning process is the preparation of the METL by battalions and separate companies. This is the most important step in the RC training planning process but, in many cases, one of the most misunderstood. Many RC commanders try to include in the METL all tasks listed in those training publications that identify all the tasks that their unit would be required to perform during wartime, their Mission Training Plan (MTP) or Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP). As a result they spend valuable training time on nonessential tasks, or tasks that their units can already adequately perform. This time could be better used to train for more important tasks.

The METL exists because units do not have the time to train during a TY on all of their wartime tasks. Training efforts must be prioritized to maximize the use of the time available. The METL identifies only those tasks that are critical to accomplishing the unit's wartime mission. It provides the focus for the unit's training during peacetime and identifies those tasks that will require additional training upon mobilization.⁶ The METL is developed by the commander from his unit's mission statement (which can be found in the unit's base TOE, the unit's MTP or ARTEP), TAG/MUSARC guidance, CAPSTONE gaining command guidance,⁷ FORSCOM/NG Reg 350-2, AT evaluation (FORSCOM FORM 1-R), and most importantly, from his own personal evaluation of the unit's training status. Although he is sometimes overwhelmed by the many sources of guidance, the RC commander has the primary responsibility to resolve conflicts and drive problems to solution. The RC commander must ensure that his METL focuses on those tasks which make the greatest contribution to wartime readiness. (figure 2)

This prioritization can be less difficult if two policies regarding training guidance from CAPSTONE gaining commands are followed. First, the guidance must be provided early enough for use by the RC commander in the preparation of his METL and YTP. Second, the training guidance should be sent through the peacetime HQ, the TAG/MUSARCs. This is necessary to prevent

conflicting guidance from the peacetime HQ and to provide the HQ responsible for programming training resources with information that may impact on resources.⁸

UNIT PLAN

The Yearly Training Program (YTP) follows the METL in this planning process. The YTP is prepared by battalions and separate companies.⁹ It is derived from the two year plan prepared by higher HQ, and the unit METL. The YTP is the game plan that culminates with the unit's evaluation at AT. It identifies all events that will be conducted during unit training assemblies (UTA). The YTP also indicates when collective unit training tasks will be conducted, including individual tasks which support those collective tasks under the multi-echelon concept. It lists all training events and the supporting resources required, such as training areas, ranges, airlift, AC support, additional training assemblies, ammunition, training devices, and it programs the UTA for the TY. Although the RC commander is primarily responsible for the preparation of the YTP, his subordinate leaders should also be involved in its preparation. Not only do unit leaders have a better understanding of their unit's training status, but they will have more commitment to implementation if they participate in preparation of the plan.

An important function of the YTP is to minimize training distractions. Training distractions include all activities that take time away from mission essential training. It is unrealistic to expect the elimination of all training distractions. Requirements such as HIV testing and security briefings must be accomplished during unit training time. However, a genuine effort must be made to reduce training distractions as much as possible. The higher HQ has an important role in the management of training distractions. Most leaders understand the necessity for the elimination of training distractions but do not make the hard decisions required to do so. The higher HQ should have all requirements which are not directly related to training readiness submitted to the Training Office for consolidation. The Training Office should then provide a recommendation to TAG/MUSARC on which activities should be eliminated. Those activities that are identified as valid requirements should be compared with the two year plan to ensure they do not conflict with the scheduling of critical resources. These activities should then be provided to the units prior to the preparation of the YTP. This will allow the units to consolidate and schedule them so that their impact on training is minimized.

Another important function of the unit YTP is to provide balance between collective training, individual training, and other mandatory non-training requirements. Ideally, a tactical unit should conduct company or battalion level field training every training period. However, as stated earlier, this is

unrealistic. Requirements for HIV testing, security briefings, and other non training requirements must be accomplished. In addition, training time must be devoted to individual training and the testing of individual proficiency. The RC does not have enough time to conduct a company or battalion level FTX every month during weekend training assemblies nor do the leaders normally have enough time to do the planning required to conduct an FTX every month.

A commander puts balance in his training program in the following manner. After identifying his unit training needs, the commander determines that the defensive task identified in his ARTEP or MTP requires additional training. The commander programs an FTX in November using a Multiple Unit Training Assembly 5 (MUTA 5), which is 5 four hour UTAs. He identifies the unit supplemental tasks (such as barrier planning and fire support planning) that are related to the primary task of defense and will also be trained on during the FTX. He then identifies the related sub-unit tasks in which his subordinate units will train, using the multi-echelon approach. For example, since the company is training on the defense task, the platoons and squads will be conducting training on related tasks that support defensive operations, such as emplacing minefields and obstacles.¹⁰ At the same time, training in related individual tasks such as preparing fighting positions and employing the M60 machine gun will also be conducted. The commander then confirms required resources such as ammunition, OPFOR, MILES, AC support, and additional training assemblies

used to prepare for training. He may also determine that the unit will require refresher training in defense related tasks to prepare them for the FTX. Accordingly, he plans garrison or local area training in October on the identified tasks. In addition, since individual training tests occur during the 1st quarter, he schedules individual training during October in those areas identified in individual training test results as requiring additional work. He then programs individual testing, security briefings, and other requirements such as family mobilization briefings during a MUTA 3 in the December IDT.

Through this process, the commander prepares his soldiers for the FTX, and allows enough time to properly plan it. He also concentrates his training resources, to include an additional UTA, for the FTX because it is the major training event of the quarter. Training distractions are minimized by consolidating them in a MUTA 3 in December, while providing for some family activities using a minimum of mission training time. Actually, this process is much more complicated since the unit would not be training on one major task during a quarter, but on as many as it could accomplish.

TRAINING SCHEDULES

Training schedules are the detailed unit plans that identify specifically what, where, when and by whom training will be accomplished. Training schedules should be prepared in

detail at least three months in advance for several reasons. First, they are posted to the unit bulletin board to provide a reminder to the troops of drill dates and to keep them informed about upcoming training events. They also provide trainers with an early reminder of assigned classes so they can begin preparation. In addition, they serve as a checklist for the commander and training NCO to verify the availability of planned training resources.

Changes to training schedules should be avoided whenever possible. However, it is important to remember that the schedules are task oriented, not time oriented. Times are put on a training schedule as guidelines, and are adjusted to reflect the actual times required to train each task to MTP or ARTEP standards. More time may be required for some tasks, less for others. For example, an Infantry company schedules training for two hours on the hasty attack task. After training on the movement to contact task, the company commander determines that the unit needs an additional hour in order to be able to perform it properly. He can continue to train on that task and delay the start of the hasty attack task training for an hour. At the end of the training period, the commander should annotate the record copy of the training schedule to show what changes were made, the results of the AAR, and his assessment of the effectiveness of the training. By doing so, he can more accurately program training later in the TY. These annotated schedules should be reviewed periodically and used to

post the commander's copy of the METL with his assessment of unit training so that he has a clear idea of his units' training status at all times.

PREPARATION FOR TRAINING

The last step in the planning process is the preparation for training. The unit trainers meet prior to training for final coordination and to give instructors time to prepare for the conduct of training. RC units are allocated additional paid training periods for leaders and trainers to use to prepare for training. These additional training periods are limited and should be programmed on the YTP like any other training resource.¹¹ Because these additional training periods are limited, the commander must use them to support major training events and to ensure that his training meetings are organized, efficient and focused on specific objectives.

Training meetings should be disciplined, goal-oriented work sessions which will support the unit's training mission. The unit commander should have a written plan prepared prior to the start of the training meeting. The plan should identify what tasks will be accomplished during the training meeting, who is going to carry them out, and what resources are available to support the training. Copies of the plan should be provided to all participants or it should be posted on a chalkboard for everyone to see. Sufficient work space and resources should be

provided to each participant as needed. The meeting is run by the unit commander who begins with an overview of the training plans for the unit training period. He explains what will be accomplished during the training meeting and then lets his personnel conduct their preparation. The unit commander should keep himself free to check on the progress of the participants and ,if necessary, to resolve problems. (It is important to note that the paid additional training meetings must be at least 4 hours long but may be as long as 8 hour.)

CONCLUSION

Despite great strides in RC training readiness, there is still room for improvement. Continued progress will require aggressive and imaginative management by the RC leadership. Although RC units are pushing the limits of time, their most critical training resource, they can continue to improve through long range planning, improved resource management, and reduction of training distractions at TAG/MUSARC level. In addition, unit commanders must focus their training efforts on those tasks that contribute directly to wartime readiness. Unit commanders also need to program a balance between collective and individual training, and to prioritize their resources to achieve realistic field training.

DO YOUR DUTY IN ALL THINGS.
YOU CANNOT DO MORE.
YOU SHOULD NOT WISH TO DO LESS.
ROBERT E LEE

RC TRAINING MANAGEMENT MATRIX

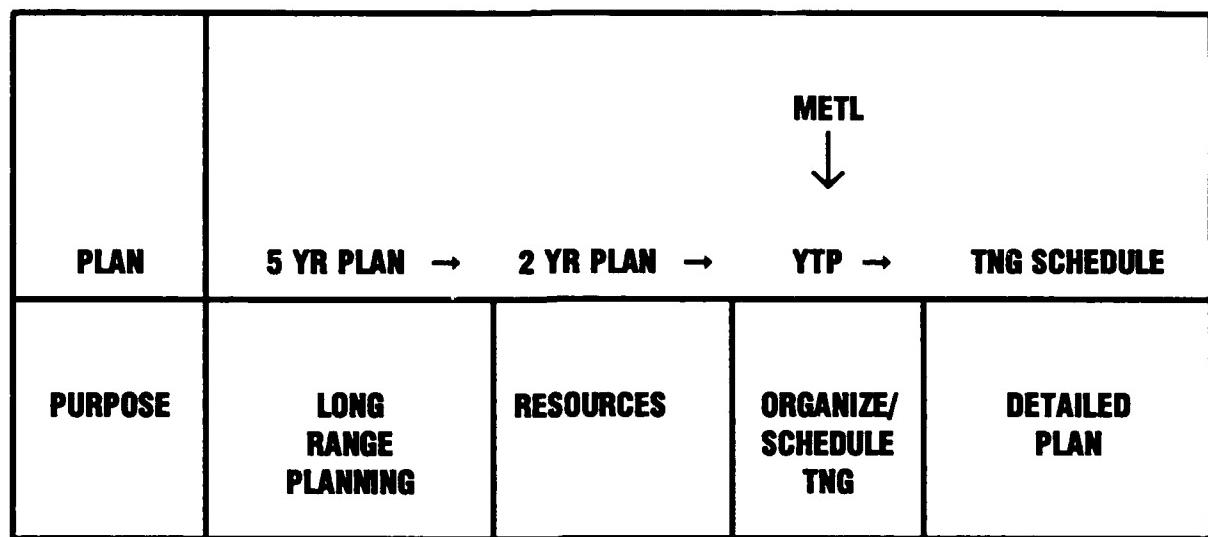


FIGURE 1

METL DEVELOPMENT

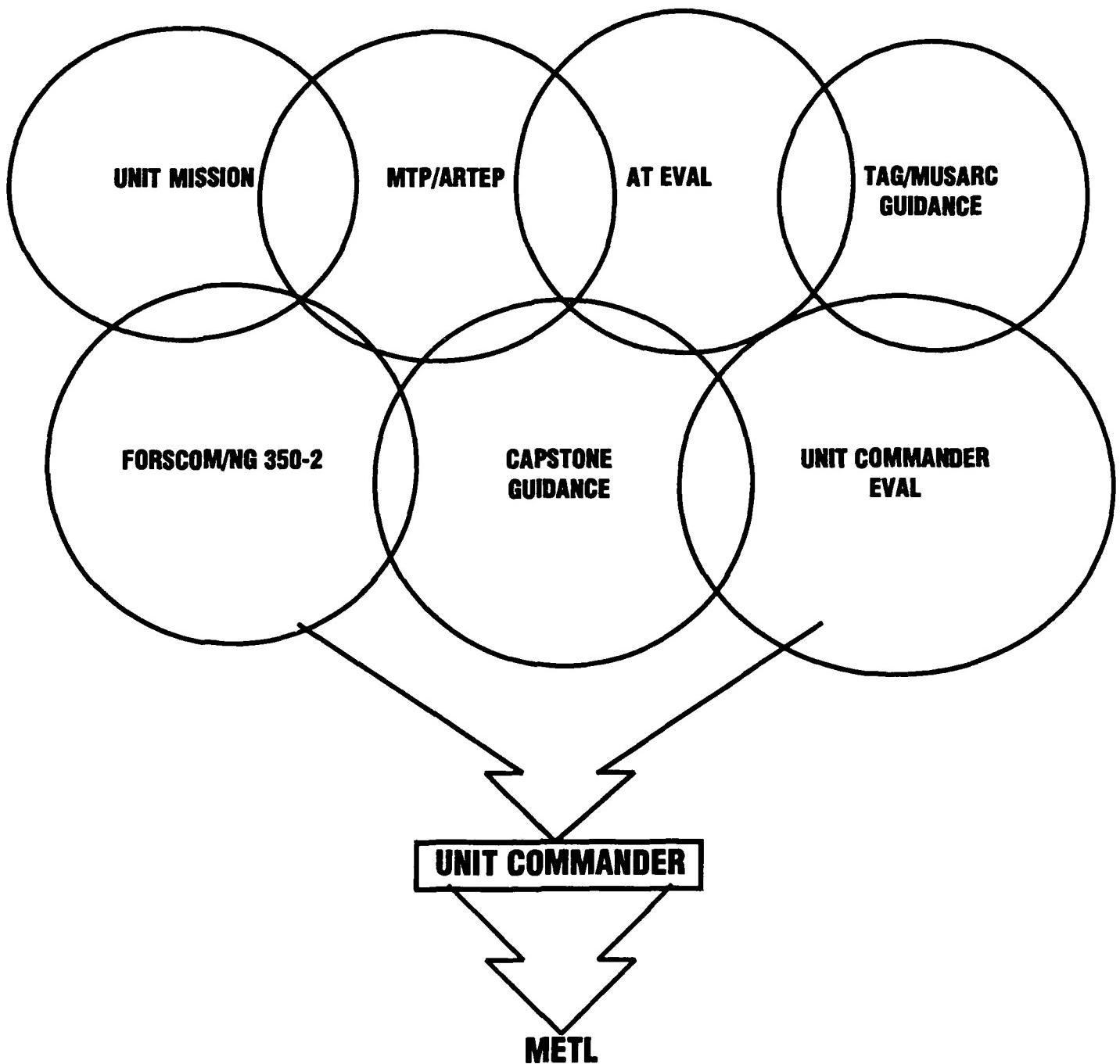


FIGURE 2

ENDNOTES

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